Strategy Research Project

Developing Today's Officer Corps for Tomorrow's Strategic Environment

by

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The continued uncertainty and complexity of the current and future joint operating environment will continue to cause our strategic leaders to face a variety of challenges and rely on Joint, Intergovernmental, Interagency, and Multinational (JIIM) partners to address these challenges. Senior leaders have acknowledged the importance of leader development and specifically the need to incorporate more JIIM type development earlier in an officer's career to prepare them for future service at the strategic level. As the U.S. Army continues to conduct current operations and prepare for future operations in a fiscally constrained environment, the success of the U.S. Army's leader development program in preparing officers for strategic level service relies on how effective it can balance the breadth, depth, and time associated with the mutually supportive efforts across the institutional, operational, and self-development domains.

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Developing Today's Officer Corps for Tomorrow's Strategic Environment

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Developing Today's Officer Corps for Tomorrow's Strategic Environment

> We need senior generals and admirals who can provide solid military advice to our political leadership…and we need young officers who can provide solid military advice, options, details, the results of analysis to the generals and admirals.
>
> —General John R. Galvin[1]

In January 2012, the Chief of Staff (CoS) of the United States (U.S.) Army, General Raymond Odierno, published his *Marching Orders* providing intent, priorities, guiding principles, and leader expectations for our U.S. Army. One of the five priorities addressed the importance of leader development to "meet our future security challenges in an increasingly uncertain and complex strategic environment."[2] The *Joint Operating Environment 2010* describes some of these complexities and uncertainties in the form of various trends extending out to the year 2030. These trends address the impact of; an inverse proportion of demographic changes between developed and developing countries, diminishing energy resources, failing or struggling economies, natural disasters, climate change, and shortages in food and water. Individually, any one of these circumstances provides a unique challenge to the security environment.[3] However, their totality, combined with a borderless world brought on by globalization, provides a clear depiction of what we can expect of the future security.

> The foreseeable future promises to be an era of persistent conflict – a period of protracted confrontation among states, nonstate entities, and individual actors increasingly willing to use violence to achieve their political ends. The future is unlikely to unfold as steady state peace punctuated by distinct surges of intense conflict. Rather, the major initiatives of U.S. foreign policy – major war, strategic deterrence, foreign humanitarian assistance, security cooperation, and so on – are all likely to unfold against a global backdrop of chronic conflict.[4]

The current and future challenges of the 21st Century requires the U.S. to remain engaged across the globe and incorporate a wide array of capabilities across our Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, Multinational (JIIM) partners in meeting these challenges. Our experiences during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation New Dawn (OND), and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) reinforce the notion that our enemies are resilient, well trained, agile, and very adaptive. In addressing the United States U.S. Army War College (USAWC) class of 2013, a visiting Combatant Commander commented that "the 21st Century war is brain on brain."[5] Although force structure and modernization play a vital role in sustaining the strongest military in the world, "investment in the education of the U.S. Army Officer Profession is the best single means for leveraging every other investment made in the U.S. Army."[6]

Various studies and initiatives over the past several years focused on the development of our officer corps and more specifically how we can more effectively prepare them to serve at the strategic level. Senior leaders have identified and acknowledged gaps in our approach to leader development and the challenges with balancing a tactical/operational foundation broadened by more knowledge in areas such as force development and strategic planning, while developing an appreciation and understanding of strategy and policy. They have also concluded that developing leaders to serve at the strategic level must occur much sooner in an officer's career and not wait until they are about to be assigned within that environment.[7] In his *Strategic Guidance to the Joint Force,* the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) reinforced this point as one of the key efforts in developing the Joint Force 2020: "Drive Jointness deeper, sooner in…, and leader development."[8]

In order to meet the guiding principles provided by the CJCS and U.S. Army CoS, the U.S. Army must determine how to best prepare officers to serve as expert advisors to generals and admirals and ultimately develop into these same generals in order to provide expert advice to our nation's civilian leaders. This paper examines how the U.S. Army's current leader development model contributes to the development of strategic minded leaders and provides recommendations to consider in balancing this developmental effort.

One of the key challenges in developing officers for strategic level service is identifying what skills or competencies a strategic level officer should possess. In fact, this is not a new challenge. In December 2001, the U.S. Army CoS directed the USAWC to identify required skills for strategic leaders in a post 9-11 environment.[9] During a two year study, a research team reviewed the prevailing military and civilian materials on strategic leadership, visited numerous military and civilian organizations involved with leader development, and considered the future operating environment. In 2003, their research resulted in the development of six metacompetencies: identity, mental agility, cross-cultural savvy, interpersonal maturity, world-class warrior, and professional astuteness.[10] The intended benefit of reducing the comprehensive lists of strategic level skills to a more manageable list was to support institutional efforts in focusing leader development and also aid individual efforts with self-assessment.[11] Since the completion of this study, the U.S. Army has gone through two updates to its leadership doctrine and other agencies, services, and research efforts have identified a variety of competencies or characteristics necessary to succeed at the strategic level.

The U.S. Army published its most recent leadership manual, Army Doctrinal

Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership*, in August of 2012. It describes

three broad competency categories of leads, develops, and achieves, with ten key

supporting competencies, and a number of associated tasks and sub-tasks which vary

as the leader progresses from direct to strategic level service.[12] Although many of the

leadership competencies carry over throughout direct, organizational, and strategic level

leadership, the difference is how the leader applies them with respect to the situation

and environment.[13] We describe the situation and environment at the strategic level in

terms of volatility (rate of change), uncertainty (inability to know everything), complexity

(the difficulty of understanding), and ambiguity (type of uncertainty) also known as

VUCA.[14] Like competencies, we can argue that the VUCA environment can also

transcend all levels of leadership and often does. However, the difference at the

strategic level is in the level of complexity or uncertainty, the number of external

stakeholders involved, competing demands across a variety of priorities, interests, and

goals from these stakeholders, and the impact of time.[15]

The challenges posed by a VUCA environment are routinely associated with

operating alongside our JIIM partners. In 2010, the RAND Corporation conducted a

study on developing U.S. Army officers' capabilities for JIIM environments. They

concluded that the most frequently addressed capabilities for success included: general

interpersonal skills; knowledge of other government services'/agencies' capabilities,

culture and processes; communication skills (written and oral); conflict resolution; and

negotiation skills. The absence of any one particular skill did not necessarily result in an

officer's inability to perform well, and general skills outweighed knowledge of the

environment.[16] The 2010 Joint Officer's Handbook lists fifteen competencies for joint staff officers to possess with additional supporting information across four general categories of: general business and professional skills; interpersonal skills; joint and service specific military knowledge; and lifelong learning skills. The more common competencies include: knowledge of a joint staff officer's role and consistent high level performance; knowledge of one's own service; advanced communicative skills within a diverse workforce to include ability to read, write, and research; well- developed strategic and higher order critical thinking; and effective at exercise planning and preparation.[17] The Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) also derived a list of competencies for serving on Navy staffs of operational commands which included cultural awareness, critical thinking, written and oral communication, and several others commensurate to those found in the Joint Officer Handbook.[18] Senior leaders serving on high level JIIM staffs reported the need to perform executive level staff work in making recommendations to senior leaders that is thoroughly researched, concisely presented, and backed by facts.[19] Interviews with other senior leaders who commanded at the colonel or Navy captain and higher level commands provided similar results with their input falling within "three broad categories: cognitive, interpersonal, and managerial styles."[20]

The various studies, current manuals, and handbooks provide a wide variety of competencies required of officers at the executive/strategic level and JIIM environment. As depicted in Figure 1, the Joint Officer's Handbook and ADRP 6-22 have the most comprehensive list across the six metacompetencies with the most common across all studies falling within culturally savvy, interpersonal maturity, and world-class warrior.

2003 USAWC Study	Identity	Mental Agility	Cross Cultural Savvy	Interpersonal Maturity	World Class Warrior	Professional Astuteness
2008 CNA Study		-Critical Thinking	-Cultural Awareness	-Written and Oral Communication	-K of other Svcs	-Broad K of the Navy
			-K of other Svcs		-K of Jt Opns	
					-Expertise in Fiscal Issues	
					-Expertise in Opns Planning	
2010 RAND Study			-K of other govt agencies	-Communication Skills (written and oral)	-K of other govt agencies	
			-K of other Svcs	-General Interpersonal Skills	-K of other Svcs	
				-Conflict Resolution and negotiating skills		
2010 Joint Officer Handbook*	-Lifelong Learning Skills and Behaviors	-Well developed higher order CT skills	-Effectively manage and lead in a diverse work environment	-Interpersonal Skills	-Military K: Jt and Svc specific	-General Business and Professional Skills
				Communicate at executive levels	-Excel in exercise preparation/planning	-Understand role(s) of a JSO and perform consistently at a high level of proficiency
				-Write, read, and research at executive level	-Maximize technology SW and HW capabilities	
			-Build constructive work relationships	-Build constructive work relationships		
2012 ADRP 6-22*	-Creates a Positive Environment	-Strategic Planning and Execution	-Extends Influence	-Communicates	-Accomplishes Mission Consistently and Ethically	-Leads by Example
	-Prepares Self		-Lead Others	-Lead Others		-Accomplishing Missions Consistently and Ethically
				-Develops Leaders		

Legend: CT: Critical Thinking; Govt: Government; Jt: Joint; K: Knowledge; Opns: Operations; Svcs: Services

Note: Select tasks listed in multiple categories. *For simplicity and space, some tasks not listed due to redundancy or similiarity with other tasks.

Figure 1. Strategic/JIIM Environment Competency Comparison

In order to provide a baseline for targeting developmental opportunities, the U.S. Army must identify the most important of the various aforementioned skills and determine the appropriate means to develop such skills throughout an officer's career. In an environment of competing demands resulting in tension between the operating and generating forces, the U.S. Army must balance the means in which they intend to develop strategic savvy officers within the current leader development model.

Leader development across military and civilian institutions is widely recognized as a continuous and progressive process that incorporates a combination of schooling, real world or occupational experiences, and personal, individual effort throughout an entire career and/or lifetime. The U.S. Army's approach to leader development leverages three components (education, training, and experience) across separate but

mutually supporting domains: institutional, operational, and self-development.[21] The

following figure illustrates this independent but mutually supporting relationship.[22]
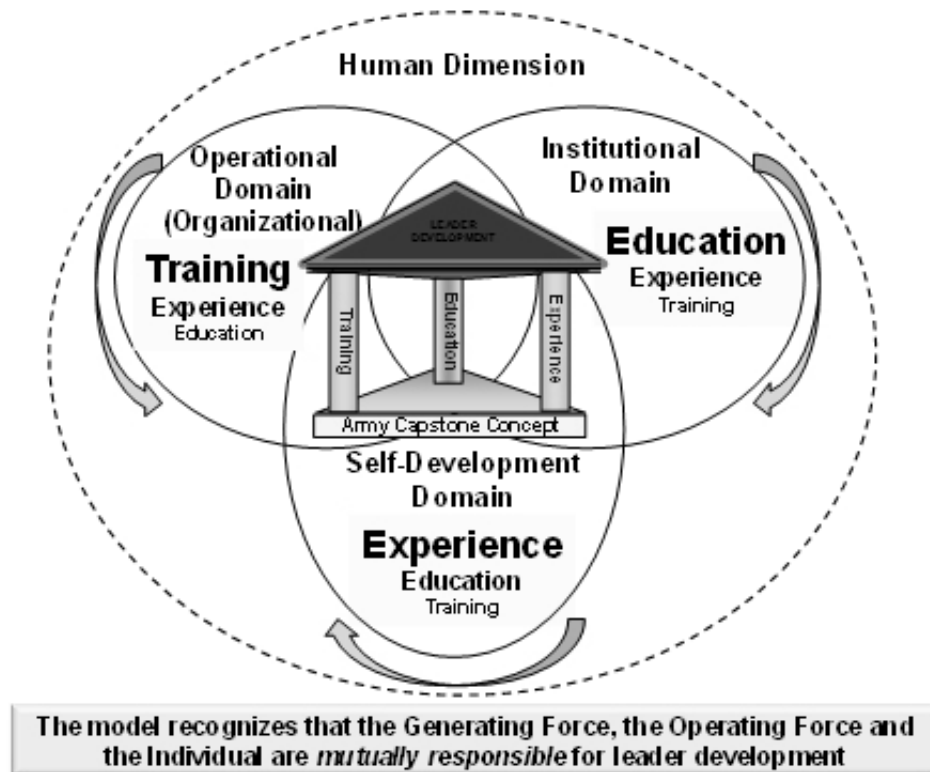
Figure 2. U.S. Army Leadership Development Model

As reflected by the illustration, each developmental domain incorporates the

components of education, training, and experience albeit to varying degrees and levels

of emphasis. "No domain has exclusive rights to any of the three leader development

components, nor can any of the domains abdicate their responsibility for any particular

leader development component to another."[23] This mutual relationship fosters a

complementary effort towards leader development where officers transition back and

forth between institutional and operational domains while filling gaps in their experience

and career aspirations through self-development.

The institutional domain provides professional military education (PME) as the foundation for leader development across five levels: pre-commissioning, primary, intermediate, senior, and general/flag.[24] The primary focus of the PME system is to develop fundamental skills associated with his/her respective area of expertise and appropriate to their rank/grade. Each level progressively builds upon previous education and experience at specific times within an officer's career from cadets aspiring to join the ranks of commissioned officers to general/flag officer. As an officer progresses through each level, the focus of education gradually declines from core, specialty, tactical knowledge and increases towards broader operational, strategic knowledge.

There are two closely related challenges associated with the institutional domain's efforts in developing officers to effectively serve in high level JIIM staff assignments and become more strategically minded. The first is a matter of timing and when officers are exposed to specific competencies. The second involves balancing the curriculum within each PME level to provide the requisite skills for both service related specialty skills and broad general skills to facilitate higher levels of responsibility.

The U.S. Army's primary institution for strategic level PME resides with the USAWC. However, officers do not obtain this level of PME until they have reached 20-24 years time in service. Prior to attending the USAWC, officers pursue inflexible, yet widely accepted, career paths, which predominantly focus on command centric positions at the company, battalion, and brigade level. In order to remain competitive for these commands, officers must pass through standardized gates pursuing pre-requisite positions within tactical formations as platoon leaders/company executive officers and battalion/brigade operations and executive officers. The result is a great majority of

officers who have operated at the tactical level and possibly operational level, with little to no exposure to strategic level thought. As a result, "for many newly arriving students, strategic thinking is a new and somewhat perplexing concept."[25]

In addition to strategic thinking, the USAWC broadly exposes students to a variety of concepts involving national level policy, strategy, and theater campaign planning in support of the employment of land forces. Future graduates appear well armed to depart and successfully serve as brigade level commanders or on Combatant Command (COCOM) staffs within the operating force. The reality is that less than 25% of the positions for senior grade officers (colonel and higher) are within the operating force. The remaining positions are within the generating force or business- side of the U.S. Army where strategic issues are prevalent.[26] As a result, "senior officers often find themselves employed in highly specialized enterprise program areas without having been afforded the executive education needed to excel.[27] Senior leaders reinforced this observation when they voiced concerns about the quality of mid-grade officers' abilities to perform basic fundamental staff work and "that even O-6s who have not had prior joint assignments are having difficulties.'"[28]

In 2010, the Combined Arms Center (CAC) initiated a study of the Captain's Career Course (CCC). In reviewing the fifteen branch courses across the U.S. Army, they determined the following:

- "Captains are not receiving the education they need to serve the nation."[29]
- "Commandants admit that they are not currently producing branch experts, but only achieving proficiency/familiarity levels in branch specific technical skills."[30]

- "The overall amount of time allocated for Captains to attend resident instruction at their CCCs has slowly declined while the number of training and education requirements and/or objectives have increased."[31]

Further evidence reflects that for the most part, primary and intermediate level PME fails to provide an adequate amount of time and focus on leadership itself. In most cases, they focus a preponderance of time on specific branch and core skills relative to the effort put forth to develop leadership skills in assessing, interacting, communicating, and developing others. Recent Center for U.S. Army Leadership (CAL) Annual Survey of U.S. Army Leadership (CASAL) reflected these concerns where "only half of the respondents felt that they were better able to influence others, or were better prepared to develop others, or that the course actually improved their leadership abilities."[32]

In the early 1990s, communicative arts were a key component of primary level PME. Institutions taught these skills in basic and advanced courses for lieutenants and captains. For over twenty two years, these skills were also the primary focus of the Combined Arms Service Staff School (CAS3). However, when CAS3 shut down, only one of the five terminal learning objectives (TLOs) transferred to the CCC included communication skills. Select schools that attempted to keep communication skills within their program eventually dropped the lessons when the common core (CC) was added to the curriculum. Although the CC included two lessons on communication arts, it failed to provide the same emphasis provided by the original CAS3 concept.[33]

The Maneuver CCC (MC3) is one of the few courses that over the past two plus decades retained their writing program and a civilian instructor staff to provide oversight.[34] Despite those courses that retained writing programs, "in every student

focus group session, one of the overarching areas Captains consistently cited as a weakness and an area they were most in need of improvement was writing."[35] The second and third order effect manifested itself within Intermediate Level Education (ILE) where each year 20-30% of Majors require and attend a "structured remedial writing program."[36]

The importance of communicative arts cannot be overemphasized. Senior leaders who served in COCOM level staff and command positions routinely address the importance of communicative skills. "The number- one skill at the senior level even at field-grade level is to write."[37] Outside of the few leadership and command experiences, an officer serves the remainder of their careers in some staff capacity from battalion to COCOM level. Even at the senior level PME, the USAWC requires students to take an online diagnostic writing exam to assess their writing ability and provides opportunities to take remedial writing instruction.

As previously noted, identifying what level to incorporate select skills as well as the balance of curriculum remain prevalent across all levels of PME. Many would argue that incorporating more JIIM type material and strategic level education at the primary level is inappropriate for this time in an officer's career and takes away from the more appropriate focus of war fighting; an argument that has some merit. However, a review of the Joint Duty Assignment List (JDAL) and manning policies/guidance indicates just the opposite.

Of the numerous JDAL positions supporting the various senior level staffs, more than 80% are designated for majors and lieutenant colonels with nearly half of the joint staffing billets on COCOMs authorized for majors and below. A common policy allows

for assigning officers one grade below the designated requirement and as a result, numerous positions could be filled with captains and junior majors.[38] With the increased likelihood of more junior officers serving at higher level staff positions, it is important to strongly consider an incorporation of more staff centric and strategic level exposure within primary level PME.

In addition to traditional U.S. Army PME, officers can attend Joint PME (JPME) in preparation for a joint assignment. There have been equal concerns addressing the timing and content of JPME. As a result of the COCOMs numerous requests to increase an officer's proficiency to serve within the joint environment, the Joint Staff ordered a review of these concerns. It was headed by Linda Fenty and is known as the Fenty study.[39] During this study, "leaders remarked that most staff officers are arriving at Combatant Command Headquarters (HQ) without the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform their tasks in a strategically focused work environment."[40] Nearly all staff and leadership participants in the Fenty study believed that JPME should provide both joint knowledge and a "solid foundation in strategic thinking and writing skills."[41] Other feedback indicated that JPME was not intended to prepare officers for staff type duties.[42] The study also reflected the importance of the services ILE in order to develop and provide knowledge of one's service capabilities. However, three fourths of the majors and potentially a higher percentage of higher ranking officers had completed ILE, which questions the effectiveness of ILE and JPME I in fully preparing officers to serve at the COCOMs.[43]

Regardless of its purpose and content, many question the importance of JPME when a growing majority of officers do not attend until after they have served in a

COCOM position.[44] Since 2006, and as a result of the implementation of the Joint Qualification System, there is no longer a requirement for officers to complete JPME I and II prior to serving in a joint position.[45]

The timing of attendance to respective PME levels and content provides for continual tension between the institutional and operational domains. This tension often involves what the institutions provide in terms of a broad understanding of knowledge and skills compared to what the operational domain expects in the form of experts ready to perform at a high level of proficiency upon arrival to their organization. It is important for leaders within the operational force to understand that while PME is designed to provide commanders with a more developed officer/leader, it is not intended to solve all the issues or challenges awaiting these officers in the operational domain.

The operational domain provides officers the training and experience to build upon their recently acquired knowledge and is widely recognized as where the majority of development takes place. Within this domain, officers serve in a variety of leadership, command, and staff positions (key and developmental (KD)) as well as various other staff, instructional, or training (non-KD) positions within both operating and generating forces. Beyond the U.S. Army's tactical and operational positions, broadening assignments provide for a significant amount of development in the JIIM arena.[46]

The U.S. Army and Joint communities place a high value on service expertise. Traditionally and by design, they do not expect officers to serve in JIIM assignments until they have completed requisite levels of PME and gained the appropriate experience within their own service; "joint officers are built on Service officers."[47] Leader

feedback routinely indicated that service oriented expertise "formed the cornerstone of Army officers' utility in a JIIM context."[48]

The challenges for the operational domain closely mirror those addressed in the institutional domain. Like balancing content within PME, the challenges placed on an officer during their operational development includes the amount of "depth" an officer receives in order to become proficient in their specific branch specialty and service and the "breadth" of experience in order for officers to become more developed in areas outside of the popular mainstream U.S. Army. A second challenge is a matter of timing, which includes attendance at PME, how soon to expose officers to more challenging JIIM assignments, and the available time an officer has in their career to meet or pursue these endeavors.

Today, we have a large cohort of officers from junior to senior grade who have gained increasing but differing amounts of experience alongside JIIM partners while performing their normal service duties. While on the surface, this is a promising sign, the reality is that the extent of this experience for U.S. Army officers is largely due to the current operational environment involving deployments.[49] Although the vast experience gained through multiple deployments provides for highly technical and tactical proficiency amongst the U.S. Army's junior and mid-grade leaders, over exposure to a specific mission type and location "can narrow the perspectives, at the very stage in a career when they need to be broadened. As one combatant commander put it, 'War can be a narrowing education…'"[50] As the operational environment changes and our missions draw to a close, deployed opportunities become less readily available, and officers must rely on noncombat assignments for broadening opportunities. In fact,

senior leaders view these experiences as "instrumental in developing necessary senior-level leadership skills."[51]

There are many impediments to facilitating these broadening opportunities. One, U.S. Army cultural norms prescribe a successful career path as defined by achieving promotion to lieutenant colonel/colonel and battalion/brigade command opportunities resulting in officers following a "more is better" concept to serve in as many KD positions as possible thus forgoing assignments deemed "out of their comfort zone." Two, leaders advocating for more breadth in an officer's career and mentoring junior officers to pursue these opportunities are among the minority. Three, broadening is an ill-defined term and the process for assigning and pursuing such opportunities lacks transparency and is subject to the supply and demand between available officers and U.S. Army requirements. Previous survey results reinforce many of these same issues.

> In a 2011 Army Research Institute survey of 26,132 Army officers, 54% of the respondents had not served out of their Branch or Functional Area and 75% of them saw no "positive impact on promotion or command opportunities. In the same survey, 71% of Company Grade (Lieutenants and Captains) and 73% of Field Grade Officers (Majors and Lieutenant Colonels) 'had never been formally advised and/or encouraged to seek broadening assignments'.[52]

Although these results focused on junior and mid-grade officers, senior grade officers are not immune to the reality of an imbalance amongst PME attendance and depth and breadth in career experiences which have been further compounded by the impact of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past twelve years.

> A recent survey of 129 current Brigade Commanders found that 18% (23) had not attended Senior Service College (SSC), 46 (36%) had no joint credit, and of the 37 Infantry Branch Brigade Commanders nearly two thirds needed SSC and/or Joint Credit.[53]

The result of this over pursuit of depth in ones service and functional branch greatly influences decisions made by junior and mid-grade officers as played out in the following real scenario. A branch qualified major (approximately 40 months across 3 KD jobs) preparing to graduate from ILE, has an opportunity to gain joint experience at a COCOM. A brigade commander at Fort Lewis reaches out to the branch representative at Human Resources Command (HRC) requesting assistance in filling a key position (brigade executive officer). The branch representative selects this branch qualified major as a possible candidate. He contacts his former battalion commander, and the dialogue unfolds with discussions on goals and remaining competitive for battalion command. In the end, his former battalion commander advises him to pursue more "muddy boots" time which is a reflection of the past several command boards where battalion command selects nearly all had three or more years of KD time as majors to include brigade level, which is one the major did not have. The brigade commander selects the major to serve as his brigade executive officer, and HRC supports the request.[54]

The above scenario has a ripple effect across the assignments process in what appears to be a lack of wealth sharing amongst talented officers across the force to fill the unlimited requirements placed on our HRC managers. This may explain the inverse relationship in mid-grade officer promotions amongst those that are filling positions within COCOM and other strategic environments. If the more talented officers remain within the tactical/operational realm, less talented officers are assigned to other organizations where the learning curve is much steeper and the expectations of the leadership are not met.[55]

Despite these cultural norms, select officers choose to pursue varying opportunities in different environments and at some risk to upward mobility. Their challenge is developing an understanding of what jobs constitute broadening, where these jobs exist, what their respective branch manager must fill with respect to priority assignments within the U.S. Army, and the impact on their career timeline.

The U.S. Army considers broadening assignments as developmental opportunities "outside the officer's core branch or functional area competencies…"[56] A review of the Field Artillery chapter in DA PAM 600-3 provides a comprehensive list of future assignments by grade that includes core competency type positions, which blurs the lines between developmental and broadening. Pending approval, HRC is currently redefining the term broadening to read:

> The *purposeful expansion* of an individual's capabilities and understanding provided through opportunities internal and external to the Army throughout their career, that are gained through *experiences* in different organizational cultures and environments resulting in a leader who *can operate at the strategic level* in multiple environments.[57]

In the past and present, the proverbial message sent to senior captains and junior majors is a need to serve within the "three-Rs" (Recruiting, Active Component/Reserve Component (AC/RC), or Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)). Other positions include premiere assignments as an observer controller (OC) at one of the combat training centers (CTC). The last round of positions normally falls within Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), which were often viewed as "the end of the road." By today's definition, serving in the ROTC, AC/RC, or Recruiting Command is broadening, but do these assignments prepare junior and mid-grade officers for operation at the strategic level? If not, which jobs do?

The recurring theme from senior leaders in support of successfully transitioning from tactical to strategic level involves multiple exposures to JIIM environments throughout a career. "Rather than limitation to the minimum number of mandatory assignments for promotion to general officer, interviewees opined that joint exposure should be frequent."[58] However, branch web pages at HRC rarely if ever, publish these types of assignments. An officer rarely understands what broadening assignments exist outside of their functional branch across the U.S. Army, Joint, or COCOM staffs. This lack of transparency continues throughout an officer's career until they reach colonel and are introduced to the Developmental Opportunities Module (DOM). Upon gaining access to senior leader division's website, every promotable lieutenant colonel and colonel has visibility on a wide array of assignments to include by branch specialty, joint, preferred pre-requisites such as former central selection list (CSL) candidate, job descriptions, and report dates.[59]

In addition to the lack of understanding and visibility, an officer's career timeline and the competing demands of building a service foundation to serve in a JIIM environment makes it nearly impossible for an officer to want to take the risk. In another real scenario, an officer served outside of his branch functionality to instruct at West Point. The required tour utilization timeline caused him to attend ILE (then CGSC) a year later than normal. His below-the-zone selection to major, choice to attend the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) program, and follow on SAMS utilization tour further truncated his timeline. While finally serving in a KD position (battalion executive officer) during OIF I, and without a KD evaluation on file, he was passed over for lieutenant colonel. He was subsequently promoted in the above zone category and

selected for battalion command.[60] In the end, it worked out favorably but at what cost to him and his family and what message to junior and mid-grade officers? This scenario could serve as an example of the required flexibility needed within the current promotion policies and guidelines to not dissuade younger officers from taking such risks.

As we progressed into OIF/OEF, and in order to make up shortages at respective grades, the U.S. Army reduced promotion times from 24/48-50 months to 18/36-40 for second lieutenant/captain respectively. In some recent instances, select officers were promoted double below-the zone (BZ) to major. A former brigade commander and now major general, viewed his early selection to major as having been robbed a year of developmental opportunity.[61] Now in our efforts to identify select top performers, we have robbed them of nearly two years. The combination of earlier promotions on an already rigid timeline and the traditional path for success is a difficult obstacle to overcome.

The experience gained from serving in the operational domain includes purposeful leader development within assigned organization. Commanders/leaders are responsible for mutually supporting the institutional product within the operational domain. A logical model to facilitate this effort includes assessing, teaching, training, validating, assigning responsibilities, and trust. In many cases, leaders may be inclined to skip the preliminary steps and move straight to assign responsibilities. Failure to sequentially follow each step, combined with high expectations of performance that are often unmet, results in a breakdown of trust and missed opportunities.[62]

As a matter of practice when addressing future battalion and brigade commanders during their pre-command courses (PCC), General Dempsey reinforced a

series of promises: inability to accurately predict the future; future environment never what they thought it would be; will not have the optimal organizational force design or design the perfect equipment; and guidance from their higher headquarters will come later than needed. Regardless of these deficiencies, "it is always the leaders on point who are able to take what we give them, adapt to the environment in which they are placed and accomplish the mission. Leader development becomes job number one."[63] Another promise he could have made was that the PME system will not provide their formations with experts ready to perform at a high degree of proficiency. The message here is simple. Of the promises described above, commanders can most influence leader development. Yet, from 2006 to 2010, results from CASAL surveys routinely present "Develops Others" as the lowest rated leader competency. This included a combination of supervisor abilities, emphasis placed within the unit, and the time allotted. "According to the Profession of Arms campaign senior leader cohort survey, 64% of the colonels and general officers surveyed indicated that leader development was not taking place due to OPTEMPO time demand and other work."[64] Ultimately, the combined challenges within the institutional and operational domain create gaps in development that must be made up in self-development opportunities.

The self-development domain is where an officer continues to pursue life-long learning through the pursuit of personal and professional interests not fulfilled by their PME or operational experience. Due to the inherent nature of leader development as a daily function that has no end, the self-development domain provides the largest amount of time and opportunity for an officer's development and requires a great deal of discipline on behalf of the individual. The importance of self-development is well

documented across nearly ever U.S. Army regulation, doctrinal reference, or white paper associated with leader development and training. When asked how to best develop 21st Century leaders, a COCOM commander visiting the USAWC responded with five specific thoughts; the first one being an investment in self-teaching.[65]

The U.S. Army describes self-development as a "planned, goal oriented learning that reinforces and expands the depth and breadth of an individual's knowledge base, self-awareness, and situational awareness."[66] It is further broken down into three categories: structured, guided, and personal self-development.[67]

Structured self-development (SSD) is the process of utilizing web-based training applications throughout a Soldiers' career and a pre-requisite to attend non-commissioned officer (NCO) education system (NCOES) courses. It provides a comprehensive assessment process utilizing technology like the U.S. Army Career Tracker (ACT) and secure online testing to facilitate continual growth and prepare Soldiers for their respective NCOES course. Soldiers/NCOs have three years to complete each respective level prior to attending NCOES.[68] The U.S. Army currently does not have a SSD program for the officer corps and therefore no means to assess their knowledge and competency prior to attending each respective officer education course (OES). The development of an officer SSD program modeled after the NCO SSD program is one of the top areas requiring immediate attention.[69]

Unlike SSD, guided self-development is not mandatory. It is the process of expanding ones knowledge while remaining current on changes within the U.S. Army and operational environment. Officers pursue optional but recommended development through a variety of functional courses (Ranger, Bradley Leader, Paladin Leader…),

branch technical training and correspondence courses through distributive learning, and reading books from recommended reading lists established by senior U.S. Army leaders.

Personal self-development is the process of self guided learning through the establishment of personal objectives, goals, and pace for achievement as set forth by the individual. The U.S. Army demonstrated its support for personal self-development by creating the U.S. Army Goals Book to facilitate Soldiers in deliberately assessing, planning, and pursuing developmental goals. As an example, officers may aspire to earn a graduate degree prior to attendance at their next PME opportunity.

The pursuit of civilian education through fellowships and scholarships is one of several developmental means to gain skills associated with strategic level service. Many senior leaders who were afforded the opportunity to attend civilian institutions of higher learning described this experience as having "the greatest value in their evolution to strategic-level leadership."[70] While highly encouraged, this endeavor is easier said than done. Historically, the U.S. Army's message reflected civilian education as unimportant to the profession. In the mid-1980s, the U.S. Army had over 7,000 slots each year to pursue advanced civil schooling (ACS). By the early 1990s, there were less than 400.[71] As a more recent example, the U.S. Army currently continues to provide fewer candidates for such opportunities like the Olmsted Scholar Program than other services.[72]

Self awareness plays a large role in self-development, and the U.S. Army successfully implemented the Multi-Source Assessment Feedback (MSAF) 360. This provides officers with the ability to see how their superiors, subordinates, and peers

view their performance with respect to the various leader competencies. Despite the relative success and intent of the program, it lacks any true compliance mechanism short of indicating on evaluations that one has been "initiated or completed." In other words, it requires discipline and commitment from the individual to follow through and develop, implement, and execute a plan of action to purposefully improve.

The discipline and commitment by the individual is often tested as a result of competing demands, level of emphasis/support by the unit, and availability of interesting, innovative material that is easily accessible when needed. In a Center for U.S. Army Leadership Annual Survey of U.S. Army Leadership (CASAL), 65% of respondents agree their organization expects them to engage in self-development; while only 40% agree that their organization makes time for it.[73] The amount of material and governing headquarters across the U.S. Army within the self-development domain is confusing and challenging to navigate. The Department of the U.S. Army, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), and each respective functional branch each has education and training programs and requirements that compete for the leader's time and energy.[74] While it is common place for leader development to primarily fall on the individual, without a more structured effort to enforce responsibility, accountability, and dedicate time to fulfill mandatory requirements, "self-development is often the first type of development to be overcome by events."[75]

Although the U.S. Army's leader development model provides a logical combination of developmental opportunities in a mutually supportive effort, research clearly indicates a number of challenges that prevent the model from achieving its full potential in developing officers for future strategic level service. Two consistent trends

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involve the balance of depth and breadth within institutional curriculums and operational environments and the impact of time in building proficiency and expanding experiences to broaden officers throughout their career.

As the U.S. Army continues to prepare for current and future operations in a fiscally constrained environment, our leaders must make difficult decisions involving force structure, modernization, and readiness. Success in the current and future operating environments requires unity of effort across the JIIM domains, and the effectiveness of such effort is dependent less on structure and modernization and more on readiness in the form of leader development. The success of the U.S. Army's leader development program in developing future strategic leaders relies on how effective it can balance the breadth, depth, and time associated with the mutually supportive efforts across the institutional, operational, and self-development domains.

Within the institutional domain, the U.S. Army can take a more deliberate approach in the indoctrination process of the U.S. Army Profession beginning at the pre-commissioning level. With the pending release of the first doctrinal manual on *The U.S. Army Profession,* there are opportunities to develop a better understanding of what it means to serve our nation, the challenges we face across the globe, and begin the leader development process much sooner in an officer's career. The concept of self-awareness and use of peer evaluations, personality tests, 360 assessments can be introduced as early as pre-commissioning and continued throughout each PME level to see how an officer grows. Additionally, we can expose cadets to specific environments and courses within the social sciences, language, cultural, and communicative arts.

The U.S. Army should conduct a comprehensive review of the various skills we seek to develop in an officer and incorporate an expose, familiarize, and make proficient methodology to synchronize and coordinate specific curriculum content that is not simply additive but complementary throughout the PME process. This should include JIIM type organizational, doctrinal, and conceptual content throughout all levels of PME, and more importantly, the requisite time to meet these requirements.

Within the operational domain, the U.S. Army must pursue a more deliberate approach to developing and/or broadening young officers earlier in their careers and within an appropriate timeframe related to PME and service experience. This can be done in a number of fashions. One, reintroduce the dual-career track system where an officer can transition back and forth between operational and generating force type duties such as comptroller, acquisition corps, working with industry, and other specialty skill functional areas but with additional focus on opportunities within each of the JIIM domains. This could potentially be added to the accessions process and tied to undergraduate studies/expertise. Upon commissioning, an officer could have a primary and secondary career field to facilitate a deliberately designed plan for exposure to the executive level functions within the U.S. Army and Joint force. Two, develop a single track process, similar to the German General Staff model, which identifies, cultivates, and prepares officers for strategic level staffs and command leveraging the existing PME programs. This has been suggested in the form of a "Senior Strategist Program (SSP)."[76]

Junior and mid-grade officers must have a better understanding of the positions available across the greater U.S. Army and Joint community beyond their branch

specialty. The U.S. Army should conduct a comprehensive review and classify positions deemed as broadening for strategic level service. Then develop a DOM type capability to create the same level of transparency provided to senior grade officers but for senior captains through lieutenant colonel. Officers could monitor this process as lieutenants to gain an appreciation for future assignments available, pre-requisite training or experience to pursue, if positions are competitive or nominative, and plan accordingly.

Even with a successful implementation of multiple career paths and increased transparency to junior officers, the U.S. Army must normalize the promotion and career timelines and build both time and flexibility within an officer's career to pursue multiple opportunities at the mid-grade level. This can occur through a variety of methods. Instead of compressing promotion timelines to accommodate shortages in respective grades, expand the promotion timeline to stabilize these grades. If we continue to retain the option for early promotions, adjust the earliest look for BZ from major to lieutenant colonel. Instead of adjusting the cohort year group based on an early promotion, retain the officer in their original year group. Lengthen careers beyond the current 20-30 year model with a corresponding increase in time-in-grade requirements for promotions within the mid-grade ranks. There must also be an adjustment to policies and guidelines with respect to assignments and promotions that minimizes risk and creates incentive for officers to seek these assignments.

The self-development domain has the greatest opportunity and flexibility for developmental opportunities. The U.S. Army should continue to develop and implement a SSD program for the officer corps that is required before, during, and after a respective PME experience throughout the primary and intermediate levels of an

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officer's career. As a result of their CCC study, and in support of the officer learning

continuum and guiding doctrinal principles, the SALT proposed a logical implementation

strategy that places more emphasis on specific forms of self-development from

structured to guided and ultimately personal as the officer progresses from primary to

senior grades.[77]

Opportunities for distributive learning leveraging today's technologies already

exist. While they do not necessarily replace the value of the traditional face to face

environment with peers and instructors in a classroom environment, they do provide

great value in augmenting or supplementing training that can preserve the limited

resource of time. It will be important to identify which education/training modules are

most appropriate for distributive learning SSD and not simply relocate training from the

classroom to the computer. Opportunities include training modules, case studies, and

Virtual Experience Immersive Learning Simulation (VEILS) exercises tailored to prepare

officers for specific assignments or to simply expose an officer to something different

and force them to think about future challenges.

Select faculty and students at the USAWC recently assisted with validating a

VEILS exercise involving decision making in a virtual environment involving strategic

level considerations. Although not designed to provide the answers to difficult questions,

it provided real world environments involving real stakeholders and presented real world

ramifications to decisions made during the exercise.[78] This is just one example of the

endless opportunities available through technology enabled distributive learning.

Additional self-development opportunities include an expansion of advanced civil

schooling (ACS) and education beyond the military's PME. Although several competitive

ACS opportunities exist, it is clear we're not taking full advantage of them. Outside of the competitive ACS and utilization tour opportunities, a majority of officers must pursue ACS in conjunction with their normal duties or PME. Some CCCs have created opportunities to combine PME credit with college programs allowing students to earn a master's degree much sooner in their career. The Maneuver Center at Fort Benning developed the Master Maneuver Trainer Program to provide assigned instructors the opportunity to further their education. They are now expanding this to students where they will select 6-8 students from a pool of 60 applicants to remain after the MC3 and earn a Masters in Science of Organizational Leadership. Their goal is to match the participation level at the Engineer school where 83% of the FY12 CCC students participate in an ACS program. The small cost of delaying the arrival of a captain to his gaining unit by 4-6 months results in the exposure to a civilian institution, receipt of higher education, and a more rounded officer for their gaining command.[79]

Guiding principles for leader development exist throughout the U.S. Army and Joint force, and there is no shortage of opportunities to pursue leader development within the intent of the U.S. Army's leader developmental model. However, in order to develop more strategically minded officers who are more prepared to serve at the strategic level; the U.S. Army must appropriately balance the breadth, depth, and time dedicated to expose, familiarize, and develop proficiency in strategic level skills and competencies earlier and more frequent throughout an officer's career.

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